

Twin Worlds

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Summary: A FF7/FF8 crossover. Yuffie finds her way into the FF8 world...but unfortunately so does another from her world...

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Yuffie from Final Fantasy VII finds her way into the FFVIII world. Unknown to her, another from her world has followed her.....

This is very long, but please stick with it! I think it is interesting.....any story with Sephiroth and Squall in it is bound to be....

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Yuffie was fed up. Fed of of Red XIII, fed up of Tifa, and most of all fed up with Vincent. He kept telling her that as she was so young she could do anything she wanted, and that she should make more of an effort to learn. Whenever he started going of an one of his 'learning' talks, she ran to the other end of the Highwind (trying not to be sick) and hid in the Chocobo Stable. Of course he could run ten times faster than her, but as he was usually busy looking at the stars, he soon lost interest in her.

The other two who were annoying her were Red XIII and Tifa. Red, because he kept trying to talk to her, and Tifa because she was such a.....ugh, there were no words for it. She was so goo-goo eyed over Cloud it made Yuffie even sicker. Sure, she liked the spikey haired guy, but blondes definately weren't her type, and anyway, she would never marry someone who could fight better than her. Not to mention

the age difference. At twenty-one, he was....five years older than her. No, she definately could not imagine herself with Cloud. She liked him, even though sometimes he treated her like a kid. Like saying:
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sometimes I'm sick too Yuffie... in that slow, patronising way. It made her want to hit him. But overall, he was a good guy. A great friend to have. And he was teaching her how to fight better. She could see what Tifa liked about him, but it seemed clear to Yuffie that Cloud didn't like her in that way. How could Tifa be so stupid.

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Sitting in the corner of the Chocobo Stable, Yuffie pushed further back into the straw, hearing footsteps outside. Vincent had been trying to teach her about the reason the tides were reflected in the moon cycles. Feeling something hard pressing into her back, the slender girl turned around to see what it was. It was a little gold handle. Curious, Yuffie pulled it hard. It opened a little cupboard or passageway, she couldn't see because it was so dark. Hearing Vincents voice calling her, she cursed, and looked in desperation for a place to hide. Deciding to chance it, she dived into the blackness she had just uncovered, pulling the door half shut behind her.

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Selphie sat on her bed at Balamb Garden dormitory, humming along to the tune on the radio, her eyes shut as she ate an apple. It was so good to have radio waves she thought. She wasn't old enough to remember what the radio sounded like before the blockage 17 years ago. Lying back on her bed with a contented sigh, she threw the apple core in the bin and kicked off her boots. She heard a shout of laughter from a neighbouring room, followed by an angry voice of the cadet sharing it, who was trying to study. She giggled, thankful that she no longer had to share a room with five or six other cadets. As a Seed, she now had her own room, decorated in her own style, with her own cupboards and her own desk. Heaven! she thought, getting up off the bed.

She crossed to the cupboard, intending to get out her hairbrush. She opened it and gasped. All she could see was a thick blackness. Backing away rapidly, she grabbed her shinobou from the bed and got into a fighting stance. Her green eyes opened wide as she heard a cough from inside her cupboard, followed by a white fist clawing its way out. Selphie's mouth dropped open as she saw a head and shoulders come out of the cupboard.

"A little help?" asked a sarcastic voice. A young girl, younger than Selphie was staring at her out of the cupboard. Selphie found herself unable to speak.

"Help!" repeated the girl. Selphie, still holding the nunchaku, crossed to the cupboard cautiously.

"Who...what are you?" Selphie asked incredulously. Yuffie tutted impatiently.

"I'm Yuffie. Are you one of those illusions Sephiroth keeps making?"

You're not a very helpful one."she said, attempting to get her legs out of the cupboard. Selphie dropped her weapon and helped Yuffie out of the cupboard. "I'm Selphie Tilmitt." she said, staring at the dishevelled girl. Yuffie smiled. "Yuffie Kisaragi." she said.

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Vincent opened the door of the chocobo stable. He heard a gasp as he opened it. "Yuffie?!" he called in his deep voice. Throwing handfuls of straw into the air he searched for her, pausing as he heard voices.

who are.....what.....you he heard vaguely. He moved closer to where he heard the broken sentence, listening carefully. He heard some more.

illusion...are you...one... he heard. That was definately Yuffie's voice. He'd recognise it's childish lilt anywhere. "Yuffie?" he called again, pulling apart the straw. he saw a halfopen cupboard.

selphie...mitt he heard, the unfamiliar voice now clearer. He opened the cupboard door wider, staring into the blackness. he heard Yuffie.

yuffie kit.....ari.... her voice faded as he listened. "Yuffie!!" he yelled into the cupboard. "Yuffie" he called again, a feeling of dread creeping over him. He felt as if she was slipping away from him.

Grabbing the powerful torch which was on the other side of the room, he shone it into the cupboard.

He was faced with the metal back of the cupboard. It was empty.

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Selphie smiled at the girl, liking her immediately. "How did you get in there?" she asked, sitting on her bed. Yuffie sat beside her. "I just opened a door, and I found myself here." she said with a shrug. Her eyes lit up as she saw the discarded nunchaku.

"Hey! Those are cool! Can I try?" she asked. Selphie nodded.

"Sure. Just try not to break anything. Are you a Seed?" she asked. Yuffie looked confused.

"What's a seed?" she asked, picking up Selphie's weapon. Selphie looked at her in astonishment.

"You've never heard of Seed? Where have you been the last few years? Seed has been around for at least twenty years." Yuffie bit her lip thoughtfully.

"I've been in Wutai. I guess it is pretty out of the way. What is Seed anyway? Is it a resistance group against Shinra?" she asked innocently, swinging the nunchaku. Now it was Selphie's turn to look confused.

"Wutai? Shin-ra? Are...are you from another world?" she asked. Yuffie put down the weapon and looked at her. She didn't say anything, but looked past Selphie to the map on the wall.

"Oh, where is that?" she asked. The realisation was beginning to dawn on her that she wasn't in Nibelheim anymore. Selphie looked where Yuffie was pointing. It was a world map, one which all SeeD's were given on graduation as a gift.

"It's a world map," she said simply. "This world." Yuffie frowned.

"Weird. Well, I guess I am from another world then." she said. Selphie jumped up and down in excitement.

"That is soooo cool!!! Let me show you to Squall, he's going to freak out!" she said, grabbing the younger girl's arm. Yuffie didn't move.

"Wait!" she said. Selphie stopped and looked at Yuffie. Yuffie looked worried.

"I don't know anything about your world. Where are we now? Who are you?" she asked.

Selphie turned.

"We're in Balamb Garden. Here." She said, pointing on the map. "I am a SeeD. An elite mercenary." she said, with a hint of pride. Yuffie looked impressed.
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Squall was in the library. He was sitting at one of the desks in the back, reading a book about GF's for his next written test. He was frowning in concentration, it was very complex. All about brain patterns stimulating the GF's....blah blah. It was also boring.

"Squall!!" came a yell from the other side of the room. It was followed by a series of fierce calls to shut up, or get the hell outta there. Selphie ignored them, and dragging the bemused Yuffie behind her, she came bouncing over to Squall, throwing her arms around him as a greeting. Removing her arms from his neck, he held her at arms length, smiling a little. Selphie's constant exuberance had a positive effect on him, she always cheered him up.

"Look!" she said, attempting to whisper, but not doing it very well. She pushed Yuffie forward, who gave a little wave, her eyes drawn to the shining gunblade at Squall's side.

"Cool!!!" she yelled, reaching for it. He grabbed her hand and pushed her away.

"It's not for little girls." he said with a trace of sarcasm. Selphie giggled at the look of fury on Yuffie's face.

"This is Yuffie. She's from another world." Selphie said, smiling at Squall's look of disbelief. "Really. She fell out of my wardrobe." Selphie said innocently. Squall laughed hollowly.

"Yeah right. Selphie, I'm trying to study. You remeber, we have that test tommorow? The one you haven't studied for?" he said. She put her head to one side, sighing.

"Squall dearest, I'm naturally brilliant. Anyway, I'm best friends with the examining instructor. How can I fail?" she said cheekily. Squall shrugged. Yuffie stamped her foot impatiently

"What about me!?" she yelled. Squall looked at her. She was very pretty, he thought. She was wearing dun coloured shorts which showed off her long shapely legs. She also had on a khaki green top made of a rough-spun material which was cut above her navel. She was carrying a giant shiruken, a weapon which was quite common in the garden. Her hair, a soft brown colour, was curled under and streaked with blonde. She had green eyes, but they weren't as captivating or compassionate as Selphie's.

"Really, who are you?" he asked with a sigh, closing the book. She smiled. "I'm Yuffie Kisaragi. I'm a Ninja from Wutai. I am one of the group who defeated Sephiroth last summer."

"What the hell...?" said Squall, looking at her in confusion. Selphie laughed.

"Told ya!" she said. Squall blinked slowly at Yuffie.

"You, aren't from theis world? How did you get here?" Yuffie sighed.

"This is so boring. Selphie already told you how I got here! Are you slow or what?" she said, giving Squall a look of disdain.

"Squall, I thought this might be an after effect of the time-compression. A wrinkle in time maybe?" she said. He looked thoughtful.

"Probably. I can't imagine any other way she could have got here." he said, standing up. "What are we meant to do with her?" he asked Selphie. She shrugged. Yuffie shrieked in fury.

"I am here! I'm not a child, you can't just discuss me like this!" she yelled at the taller boy. Squall sighed and ignored her, which made her even more mad. Selphie laughed.

"Yuffie, calm down. Squall doesn't mean that." she said soothingly, tugging on Squall's sleeve.

"I'm sorry." he said without feeling.

"Hmp!" said Yuffie, turning her back on them. Selphie sighed.

"Sit down Yuffie. Let's talk." she said. The three sat down. Yuffie had her gaze fixed on the gunblade. She really, really wanted to pull the trigger...

"How old are you?" asked Selphie.

"Sixteen." Yuffie replied, tearing her gaze away from the glittering weapon.

"Do you have a family to get back to?" asked Squall. She looked at him, studying his face. Actually, she thought, he wasn't bad looking...

"No. I have friends. I was actually hiding from one of them when I got here. I've got this friend called Tifa, right, and she is the most annoying cow you have ever seen, you know she actually..."

"Tifa?" what a strange name." said Squall. Yuffie gazed at him. He had a scar between his eyes, it looked fairly recent. I actually made him look more masculine. Without it, she thought, he would be too....pretty.

Smiling, she focused on what Selphie had asked her. "Their names? Cloud, Red XIII, Vincent, Cait Sith, Barrett, Tifa, Cid..."

"Cid? That's what our headmaster is called." said Selphie. Yuffie continued.

"There was Aeris, but she...she was murdered. By Sephiroth." The immature girl fell silent, thinking about Aeris. It had affected her more than she let on. Aeris was someone who she had talked to a lot, and she really missed her. It was probably why she disliked Tifa, because she knew Cloud had really loved Aeris, and Tifa was trying to take her place. And because Tifa had a couple of watermelons on her chest.

Giggling to herself, she looked back to Selphie and Squall, who were looking at her strangely. Oh, right, she thought. "I wasn't laughing because of that," she said, talking about Aeris' death. "I was just thinking about Tifa."

"You really don't like her?" said Selphie. Yuffie looked thoughtful

"Sometimes she can be really nice. At other times she is really sappy, and throws herself at Cloud, saying she loves him and all that, but she doesn't really. She just thinks he would look good with her."

"Like Rinoa," said Selphie under her breath. Squall unfortunately, appeared to hear her, and smiled.

"What does Cloud say?" he asked, amused at the comparison. Yuffie rolled her eyes.

"He says things like 'oh, we're really good friends, and 'Aeris' death really upset me' and 'I need time to sort out myself' but she doesn't get it. She is so dumb. She just says 'i'm there for you when you need me' and 'we're soulmates' and 'when this is over, lets go back to Nibelheim together' but he never replies, he just goes all silent and tries to avoid her."

"Do you like Cloud? Is that why you don't like Tifa?" inquired Selphie. Yuffie laughed.

"Hell no! He's at least five years older than me!" she said, standing up. "I'm bored. Where else is there to go?" she said, restlessly. Squall stood up.

"Let's meet the others." he said. Selphie nodded.

"Other's?" asked Yuffie.

"Yeah. Our friends. You see, last summer, there was a crisis. A sorceress tried to take over the world, you know, that kinda thing, and we, the six of us, defeated her. We are all SeeD's now, and we all live here at Garden, which is like a military academy. One of our friends is a Sorceress, a good one fortunately. Her name is Rinoa. Squall's her knight." she added, throwing him a playful glance. He sighed.

"Being her knight doesn't mean we're together. It just means I'm her bodyguard.." he said, with a smile. He had been smiling a lot more recently, since Ellone was back. Selphie smiled back, touching his arm affectionately. They began walking towards the Quad, where she knew Quistis and Zell were. Quistis was teaching Zell tai chi, but he was very bad at it. Yuffie stared at the ceiling as they entered the Quad. It sparkled with the light reflecting off the pools and streams decorating the Quad, making it a quiet, peaceful place.

They eventually found their two friends on a patch of grass by a fountain, Quistis laughing at something Zell had said. The two blondes looked round as Selphie called out to them, waving. Quistis cleared a pile of books from beside her and Selphie sat down in the space. Yuffie and Squall remained standing.

"This is Yuffie," Squall said, introducing the grinning girl, who was staring at Zell's tattoo. She liked him, he was cute, she thought. A bit like Cloud would have looked if he was younger. Same spikey hair.

"Yuffie, came from another world. She...I don't know. Something to do with time compression?" he said, sitting beside Selphie. Quistis smiled at Yuffie.

"Yeah, right," said Zell, staring at Yuffie's legs. She knelt beside him, smiling.

"Really. I fell out of Selphie's wardrobe." To her, it sounded less believable the more she said it.

"Ok..." said Quistis. Selphie smiled, hugging her knees.

"It's true. Anyway, where's the witch? I mean Sorceress Rinoa." she said, smiling as the rest of the group giggled. There really wasn't any bad feeling towards Rinoa, but none of them were particularly close to her. Selphie had the feeling Rinoa would soon tire of them and move on, once she realised she and Squall weren't going anywhere. They were two different sets of people. Rinoa was a free-spirited, open-minded pretty girl, while the SeeD's were all hard-working, dedicated young men and women.

Selphie leant against Quistis' shoulder and shut her eyes, enjoying the sunshine coming through the panel above them. Next to her, Squall took off his leather jacket and relaxed, keeping an eye on his gunblade. It was a rule that all SeeD's carried their weapons at all times, something the cadets weren't allowed to do. He blocked out all thoughts off the test tomorrow, and lay back on the grass next to

Selphie, who was absently toying with the sleeve of his jacket. Yuffie and Zell were talking animatedly, and she was openly flirting with him. He didn't seem to mind.

Quistis was sitting cross legged next to Zell, reading a fiction book about a girl who got lost in the Kashkabald desert and found a forgotten city. Quistis knew it was fiction because she had been there several times in the Ragnarok, and had never seen anything. Nevertheless, it was a myth believed by many. Still, it was a good story.

"Hey, I have an idea!" said Zell. The other three looked at him sleepily. Squall didn't even bother sitting up. "Let's go to Yuffie's world. We haven't done anything fun in ages." he said.

Now Squall did sit up.

"How do you know we could get there? How do you know if Yuffie can even get back? I know Selphie never had a vortex in her bedroom before." he said sarcastically. Yuffie went pale.

"Not...able to get back?" she said softly. Squall felt a little guilty. Selphie comforted her.

"I'm sure you can. Let's go back and try." she said, standing up, brushing grass off her dress. Quistis stood beside her.

"Selphie, I hate to be boring, but, shouldn't we report this? I mean, there might be dangerous monsters coming through the vortex." she said. Selphie waved her hand in dismissal.

Suddenly there was a commotion at the other side of the quad. A young SeeD came running in, then was followed by six or seven other cadets, all screaming.

"What's going on?!" said Squall, grabbing one of the cadets as he ran past. The younger boy looked terrified.

"A man.....with long..... silver hair. He justkilled two..... kids with.... a massive sword." he said out of breath.

"Oh shit," said Yuffie.

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Squall, Zell, Quistis and Selphie all grabbed their weapons and began running. Yuffie followed them, the only one who knew what they were going to face. She yelled out to them as they ran about who it was and how incredibly powerful he was. As they entered the main hall, it was completely silent. Yuffie, out of breath, managed to catch up with the four SeeD's (who were all in much better shape than she) and leaning over with a stich, gasped out who it was.

"Seph.....Sephiro..th....we....had...killed.....him," she choked out. Selphie turned to her.

"Who is he?" she asked. Yuffie was surprised that Selphie wasn't at all out of breath.

"He....a..son...of Jenova. He's evil...kills just for the fun of...it. We have to get Cloud.....only one...who

can....defeat...Sephiroth..." she said, leaning heavily on the bridge connecting the quad to the hall.

Squall turned around. "We have no time." he said. "We must try to get to him. After Ultimecia and Griever, this should be easy." he said, walking cautiously through the recently emptied corridors. It was so quiet, but as they turned the corner there was a gurgling noise which got louder as they walked. Yuffie bit her lip, trying to remember where she had heard that sound before. Turning down the grey marked corridor, Squall put his hand over his mouth in shock at what he saw.

Six of the junior classmen were lying in a pile surrounded by a puddle of blood. A little girl was whimpering as she tried to crawl away, clutching the stab wound in her stomach.

Selphie ran to the children, lifting up the little girl, pulling open the ripped dress to see the wound. She gasped as she saw it went right through the girl. Looking back to the girl's face, she saw that she had already died.

Turning away, Selphie looked at Squall, her face ashen. He took her arm, leading her away from the dead children. Yuffie looked terrified. Squall took out his gunblade as they continued silently down the hall. They walked past the cafeteria, past the parking lot, past the training centre and finally past the library. They reached the directory, and noticed a red liquid on the floor. Yuffie moaned, and walked closer to Zell. Quistis looked paler than ever, and was praying silently. Together, they climbed the stairs to the elevator, careful not to slip on the blood which had trickled down.

"This is like a horror film," said Zell quietly. Quistis nodded, swallowing hard. Squall took a deep breath, and pushed the button to open the elevator. They all took a step back as it opened, terrified at what it might contain. The door opened, and inside there was a red stain, as if something bloody had been laid there for a while. Squall tried to stop imagining what it might have been, but he was unsuccessful. Horrible images of the children went through his head, and he was worried as to where Rinoa and Irvine were.

They travelled up to the headmaster's office in time to hear a swishing noise and a feminine scream. Running through to the office, they saw Xu clutching her arm, collapsed on the floor in agony. Cid was standing behind his desk, too shocked to move. A tall man was standing next to Xu, smiling at her fallen body. He was wearing black, and had long silver hair which hung loose down his back. He was carrying a long thin sword unsheathed, which glistened cruelly. The blade was dripping with Xu's blood.

Yuffie ran forward, pushing past Squall. "Sephiroth!" she screamed in

a terror filled high pitched voice. He turned to her slowly, recognising her childish voice.

"Yuffie. Yuffie Kisaragi. The little Ninja girl." he said in a deep, menacing tone. She shivered, but stood still in front of him, her shiruken out. He moved towards her, his silver hair flowing behind him. "Where are your little friends? The bar maid, and the failure?" he asked mockingly. Yuffie swallowed hard.

"I don't need them to fight." she said, her voice shaking. Squall moved beside her. Sephiroth laughed.

"Really, little girl. You can't defeat me. You know that. If even Cloud couldn't, then how could you?" he said, holding his masamune over the trembling girl. He brought it down swiftly as she screamed.

He laughed as she looked down, expecting to see blood. There was a wisp of her hair on the floor. Reaching up, she realised he had cut off a chunk of her hair.

Sephiroth laughed bitterly at Yuffie, who had tears in her eyes. Squall now faced Sephiroth. Sephiroth looked at him in disdain.

"Who are you? Not that it matters, I shall kill you soon anyway. You will become just one of many." he said sounding uninterested.

"I'm a SeeD. Squall Leonhart. My friends and I defeated Sorceress Ultimecia, we can do the same to you if you don't leave now." Squall said, furious as he thought of the children he had seen, speared by that masamune.

"Then try." said Sephiroth, swinging his sword round quickly, aiming for Squall's neck. Squall blocked it easily, anticipating that move, but still surprised at Sephiroth's strength. The older man opened his eyes wide as Squall blocked the fatal move. Never had he been blocked like that. No-one had ever been fast, or strong enough. Except....Cloud.

Sephiroth smiled evilly at Squall, and swung the sword around for another attack, aiming low. Squall jumped back, dodging the slice, and attacked Sephiroth with his sword. This was a signal to the others. Quistis and Selphie ran to Squall's side to help him. Zell reluctantly stayed out of the battle, knowing he would have no chance without a long range weapon.

Yuffie stood rooted to the spot as she listened to the harsh sound of metal on metal, the crack of Quistis' whip and the sound of the chains on Selphie's shinobou as they attacked Sephiroth. He was a vicious fighter, fast and deadly. Even in a three against one battle, the SeeD's were struggling, as he was so fast and strong. His defence was very high, but so was Squall's.

Selphie got knocked out first. She gasped as Sephiroth's masamune struck her chest, and she staggered backwards. Quickly, Squall revived her, and she began to fight again. Quistis was nearly in tears as she attacked him. She was thinking of the junior classmen he had murdered, and was furious. They had been in one of her classes, and she knew the children well. This made her even more powerful as

she attacked him, and in this particular battle, her strength was almost as high as Squall's.

Zell pulled Yuffie away from where the four were fighting, and made her sit down. She shook herself free of his grasp, and turned to him, her face white.

"We have to get help." she said, her voice hoarse. He nodded.

"From your world?" he said. She stood up, and ran towards the elevator, ignoring the scream of pain from Quistis as she was struck. Yuffie nodded, and got into the elevator.

"Cloud and Tifa. They can help. And Vincent. We'll get all of them. Hurry!" she said as they reached the bottom. Running as fast as they could, Yuffie and Zell sprinted to the dormitories.

"Where....Selphies' room?" asked Yuffie. Zell led her to it.

Apprehensively, Yuffie opened the cupboard door. She sighed in relief as she noticed there was swirling blackness there still. She climbed into the wardrobe with help from Zell, and crawled forwards down the narrow shoot on her hands and knees. Zell followed, and Yuffie was relieved as she fell out onto straw on the other side. She stood up and dusted herself off, and turned to help Zell out of the cupboard. She took his hand as he crawled, and yanked him to his feet. The couple stood in the middle of the chocobo stable, covered in straw and grime from the passageway. Suddenly Zell lurched to the side.

"Are we on a ship?" he asked, regaining his balance. Yuffie nodded, pleased for once she was able to keep on her feet. She turned, and ran through the door, and up onto the deck, Zell following.

"Cloud! CLOUD!" She yelled. The tall blonde turned to see Yuffie and Zell.

"What is it Yuffie?" he asked, assuming Zell was one of the staff. He figured she must have a good reason to be up on deck when she was usually sick up there. "Are you hurt?" he said, puzzled. She shook her head vehemently.

"Sephiroth!!!" she yelled. Cloud's face dropped. He looked down at the wooden deck. Yuffie continued. "There...there's a way into another world. I fell through into it, and he must have come the same way. You must come back with me and defeat him, otherwise...." she looked at him pleadingly. Cloud looked to Zell.

"Are you from that other world? Is this some kind of game?" he asked, walking towards Yuffie. Zell stood up straight.

"I'm a SeeD from Balamb Garden," he said automatically. "Yuffie fell out of a wardrobe and one of my friends found her. Soon after, we heard reports of a silver haired man murdering SeeD's. We followed, and found six dead children, all under the age of seven. Our leader, Squall, one of the instructors and another SeeD are fighting this man as we speak. I don't know how long they can hold on." he said, getting more and more worried as he spoke.

Cloud fetched his ultima weapon from the corner of the room, calling to Vincent and Tifa. The two came to him, and he explained the situation to them. "Come on!" yelled Yuffie, leading them to the chocobo stable. Zell climbed in first, anxious to rescue his friends, followed by Vincent (who was annoyed at Yuffie for escaping him earlier) and then Yuffie. Tifa hung behind.

"Do we have to go through there?" she asked Cloud in her high pitched voice. He sighed and gave her a little shove. Annoyed, she got on her hands and knees and crawled through the hole, followed by Cloud.

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Squall cursed as Quistis was knocked out. The two women were fighting incredibly hard against the seemingly invincible man, but they were beginning to feel weary. Selphie was swaying on her feet beside him, and he wished he had the breath to give her even a few comforting words, but all his energy was being spent on keeping himself alive.

Selphie revived Quistis, who was covered in blood from the numerous cuts and stabs that Sephiroth had given her. Selphie had the blood of the children on her yellow dress, which made her feel so sad, it actually slowed her down a little. Squall was Squall. Once they had prepared themselves with Regen, Protect and Shell, they had settled into the pattern of Meltdown, Aura, Renzokuken and then Curaga on whoever Sephiroth had attacked. They had settled in for a long battle, but occasionally Sephiroth performed a move which KO'd one of the women.

Squall repeatedly launched his limit break at Sephiroth, and eventually it seemed to take effect. Sephiroth fell to one knee, clutching his shoulder, and looked up at the SeeD's with a look of pure hatred in his smoky green eyes. He stood up slowly, and spread his arms out wide. Then he cast Ultima. The blinding explosion forced Squall and the others to their knees, making them seem to bow to the glorious-looking Sephiroth. When the magic finished, Squall stumbled to his feet, and readied himself for another attack, but Sephiroth was nowhere to be seen.

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Climbing out the other side of the passage, the other-world people were amazed. Cloud immediately drew his sword, narrowing his azure eyes as he took in the silence around him. Unknown to Zell, all the other SeeD's had fled the Garden to call in reinforcements from Galbadia, restored Trabia, and new Esthar Gardens. . Cloud took a step forward into Selphie's room, glancing at the world map.

"This way!" called Zell, running through the corridors which housed the 1000 SeeD's and cadets. He ran through the halls, speeding up as he passed where the children were. Tifa was out of breath before they reached the library. She wasn't used to running so fast.

Zell and Yuffie sprinted to the elevator, followed by an astonished Cloud, Vincent and Tifa. On the stairs in front of the elevator lay a long silver object.

"Masamune," whispered Cloud.
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Upstairs, Squall crouched over Selphie's fallen body. She was conscious, but had a deep cut on her stomach which was bleeding heavily. She was crying softly, and he had a lump in his throat as he pressed his hand against the wound, not knowing how to help her. Quistis was sobbing in the corner, holding Xu in her lap, who was unconscious, and it was unlikely she would survive. Sephiroth had nearly severed her arm, and during the battle, she had slowly lost a huge amount of blood. Her pretty face was now a waxy grey colour, and her brown hair was matted with blood.

He cursed himself for not being able to protect his friend, and pressed harder against the wound with his gloved hand, trying to stop the flow of blood. Selphie moaned as he increased the pressure. She felt like the cut had sliced her in two. She could feel her own blood soaking her as she lay there, and she felt lightheaded as the pain began to fade.

Selphie wasn't stupid, she knew that the feeling of relief wasn't down to the wound healing, it was because her body was dying. Her brain was slowly being starved of oxygen, and she knew it wouldn't be long before she wasn't able to speak. Opening her eyes, she looked at Squall, who was bent over her, both hands pressed to her stomach. She was surprised to see tears in his eyes.

"Squall...." she whispered. He looked at her, and made her want to cry. He looked so sad, and frustrated. "Squall, I'm not going to survive this..." she said croakily. He gasped, and turned his face so she couldn't see the tears. "It's ok," she said, almost smiling. It was weird, she thought. She didn't feel sad, or lonely. She was glad he was there.

"I'm going to save you, Selphie." Squall said, turning back to her. His voice was harsher than she had ever heard it. He seemed angry. She shook her head.

"I'm lucky....I've had you...and Quisty....and..." she choked as she tasted blood in the back of her throat. Squall turned to Quistis and yelled at her.

"Quistis! Hurry!" he said, his voice almost breaking. Quistis left the unconscious Xu and gasped as she saw the amount of blood around Selphie. Quistis put a hand on Selphie's ashen face, wiping the blood away from her lips.

"Selphie, what did he do to you?" she asked, heartbroken. This was too much for her. First her children, then Selphie....

Selphie smiled weakly. She felt as if they were far away. For the first time, Selphie felt a hint of panic. She didn't want to slip away, she wanted to stay with her friends. She moved her lips, trying to call them, but she found she couldn't speak. She could see Squall's lips moving, but she couldn't hear what he was saying. Quistis had her hands covering her face, and was crying silently. Selphie wanted to tell her not to be sad, but she couldn't move. It was as if she was looking at them from underwater. They were blurred shapes. 'don't leave me' she tried to say, but she found it hard to even think the words.

She felt very cold, and her eyelids felt heavy. It was a relief to shut them, instead of fighting. She welcomed the blackness which surrounded her, as the last of her pain ebbed away.
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For a few seconds they stared at the long silver sword. Cloud went over to it and picked it up cautiously, wondering how Sephiroth managed to handle such a long weapon. Zell looked up at the elevator, which was now covered in bloody handprints. One was small, which he knew was Selphie's from before, but the others...whose were they?

Vincent walked over to where Cloud was standing. Cloud looked up at the older man. "What can we do?" asked Vincent. "We don't know where he is." Zell ran up to them.

"He's on the top floor. My friends are fighting him." he said, running up the slippery steps. Tifa was looking around, feeling sick. The smell of blood was very strong, the steps were coated in it, and there was blood on the Masamune. Following Zell up the stairs, trying not to lose her grip on the slippery handrail, she managed to get to the top. Cloud and Vincent sprinted up the stairs after her.

They entered the elevator and took it to the top silently. Zell felt a horrible feeling as he didn't hear any noises of fighting. It became obvious that the battle was over, but who had won?

Leaving the elevator, Cloud overtook Zell and ran forward, sword drawn. Opening the door to Cid's office, he saw the two survivors kneeling beside a girl in a yellow dress. Well, one which had once been yellow. Now it was mostly dark red. Taking in the rest of the room, he realised Sephiroth wasn't there. Zell had walked over to the kneeling couple, and was now embracing the female, who was sobbing uncontrollably.

Squall was beside Selphie. He wasn't crying, but was holding her bloodied hand, and staring into her face, as if willpower could bring her back. He looked in shock. In fact, he had never felt such a deep sense of loss. Selphie had been so exuberant, and so friendly. Now she was still, cold, silent. Squall felt as if he couldn't cope. He wanted to scream and cry all at the same time. How could this happen? Why couldn't he protect her?

Quistis was really crying. She didn't care what she looked like, she just clung to Zell, crying her heart out. She was sitting in a pool of her best friends blood, which was also all over her hands. Selphie was dead. She couldn't accept it. She buried her face in Zells' shoulder, crying so hard it was giving her a headache. But she didn't care. However much Garden trained SeeD's to deal with the loss of a colleague, of a friend, it wasn't enough. Nothing could prepare her for this.

Zell really was in shock. He held Quistis tight, trying to block out

the sense of grief which was threatening to take over. He couldn't lose control now, not in front of the others. Looking at Squall, Zell was surprised at how white he was, and how his hand trembled as he stroked Selphie's.

Quistis was crying so hard, he could feel the tears soaking through his t-shirt. He shut his eyes tight, and just concentrated on trying to calm Quistis down, trying to ignore his own feelings.

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Away from the grief-stricken friends, Cloud spoke to Yuffie, getting all the information he could out of her about Sephiroth.

"Did you see him?" he asked in a low voice. Yuffie nodded.

"He looked....scary. He was so full of energy. He killed some children." she said sadly. Cloud nodded.

"I wonder how he came back to life? He was definatley dead when I left him. I made sure." he said grimly. Cloud had, in fact, cut Sephiroth's throat. He wasn't going to take any chances. Vincent stepped forward.

"I...perhaps the same thing happened to him that happened to me." said Vincent. Cloud turned and looked at the taller man. Vincent continued in his deep voice. "I was ressurected after my death. Perhaps someone revived Sephiroth. This would explain his extra strength." he said. Cloud nodded.

"Maybe." Yuffie who had been hopping from foot to foot excitedly, clutched Cloud's sleeve.

"Cloud! We can help them, by bringing Selphie back!" she said. Cloud looked at the teenagers sadly, seeing how deeply this had affected them. It brought back memories of Aeris. Cloud felt a darkness pass over him as he remembered the moment Aeris died, and how futile his efforts to protect her were. He imagined the kneeling boy felt the same.

"If we knew for certain, then we should bring her back. But we still have Sephiroth to deal with." he said. He watched as Squall stood up and walked over to them. From the way he walked, Cloud could tell he was the leader.

"I'm sorry," said Cloud softly, refering to Selphie. Squall nodded silently.

"Do you have any idea of how to defeat this man?" asked Squall, his voice sounding colder than usual. Cloud looked into Squall's aqua coloured eyes, seeing a cold fury behind them.

"Just to fight him. I heard you nearly did it. If we can find him, he may be weaker now. Together, we should be able to do it." he said. Squall turned his head, glancing in the direction of his friends.

"He killed one of my best friends." Squall said. Cloud lowered his gaze.

"There...there may be a way we can...revive your friend." Cloud said.

Squall looked up sharply.

"She's dead!" he said, raising his voice. Yuffie came up to the pair.

"Sephiroth was brought back from the dead. A long time ago, so was Vincent. Maybe Selphie can be brought back too." she said. Squall took a deep breath.

"I couldn't.....I can't face this. If she can't be..." he said in despair. Cloud looked sympathetic.

"If she can though, there's still a chance. I think we should do this. You, Zell, Tifa and I should go after Sephiroth. Yuffie, Vincent and your friend will go back to our world, with Selphie, and go back to the shinra mansion." said Cloud. Agreeing, Squall turned to explain to Quistis and Zell their plan.

He didn't dare allow himself to hope that it might work.

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It was a hellish task, carrying Selphie's dead body back to the Highwind. Quistis almost broke down in tears many a time, but the thought of having Selphie back kept her going. Once through the passage, they met Cid and Red XIII, who were waiting expectantly for news of Sephiroth. They were surprised to see a very dirty Yuffie crawl out, followed by Zell (who was carrying Selphie wrapped in a blanket) and Quistis. Yuffie explained the situation, and Cid immediately ran to the controls of the Highwind to steer it to Nibelheim.

Red XIII talked quietly to Quistis while Zell told Cid the full story. They had laid Selphie in the bedroom of the ship, and Quistis and Red XIII sat beside her.

"How long had you known her?" he asked softly. She sighed.

"She was one of my students. I'd only been teaching her for a month when we she became a SeeD. She, Squall and Zell worked together. I and the headmaster put them together. They were the most competent three students in Balamb Garden. In all, I've known her for about a year." she sighed again. Red XIII put his paw on her lap sympathetically. He thought the young woman was very beautiful, and obviously very sensitive. He felt sorry for her.

They both jerked to the side as the Highwind came to a stop. Quistis stood up. She was met at the door by Zell. "We're in Nibelheim. Cid and Vincent are going to see if they can find the man they are looking for." said Zell, his eyes on Selphie. Squall had wrapped her in a soft fleece blanket before entrusting her still warm body to Zell. Her face was becoming grey, but she didn't look dead. She just looked as if she was sleeping, if it wasn't for her stillness.

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At the doors of the mansion, Vincent knelt on the ground. There was a footstep, and a long tear in the carpet. Suddedly a vision flew into his mind.

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Sephiroth gasped as he clutched at the wall with one hand, the other desperately digging his long sword into the ground as the tall man tried to keep his balance. Feeling a sharp pain in his neck, Sephiroth pushed back the long silver strands to reveal a necklace of stiches which reached from ear to ear. 'thankyou' he whispered

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"Hojo's son...." whispered Vincent. Cid turned around, irritated because the mansion was freaking him out. "Sephiroth was Hojo's son, right? Lucrecia once told me.....but it couldn't have been true...could it?" he said, half talking to himself.

"What?! What the hell are you on about?!?" asked Cid. Vincent shook his head.

"A twin. Sephiroth was born with a twin." said Vincent. " A twin who worked for Hojo. He didn't know who, or what they were, but Lucrecia told me that his own child was his apprentice, without him knowing. Maybe...they are carrying on their father's work." he said. Cid shivered.

" A Sephiroth look a like? That is a nightmare." Vincent turned.

"No! The twin...it wasn't given Jenova cells. It was made as a receptor...to receive all the weak genes." Vincent began walking quickly. Cid followed, it was difficult to keep up with the long limbed man. The eventually broke into a run, and Cid was left behind. He was out of breath as he ran down the spiral staircase. As he neared the wooden door, Cid heard talking inside. He was glad it wasn't the sound of fighting.

He entered the door, and was surprised. Vincent was talking to a young woman, about 25 years old, who had silver hair. "The twin?! A woman?!" he said in shock. Vincent turned.

The young woman smiled nervously.

"I'm Liana. Yes, I am Sephiroth's sister. He didn't know about me until a few days ago. Don't be angry at me. I had to save him. He's a part of me." she said, her clear green eyes filling with tears. Cid felt uncomfortable. He hated being around crying women.

"Just don't cry. I hate that. What we wanna know is, Liana, can you bring back another from the dead?" he asked, thinking of the dead girl on the airship. Liana opened her eyes wide. Cid noticed she had long silver eyelashes.

"I don't know. How long has it been since..." she said. Vincent cleared his throat.

"About half an hour. She is still warm."

"She? I've never...seen a woman brought back to life. Is she old? A child?" she asked. "How did she die?" Cid felt angry.

"Your &*^%\$ brother killed her!" he said, making the delicate woman tremble.

Vincent calmed her down. "She is about sixteen, seventeen, and was in very good health. She died of a stab wound to her stomach. Can you do it?" he asked. She nodded.

"I can try. It should be easy. Not like my brother. Someone..." her voice trembled. "Someone...had cut his throat." she said sadly. Cid smirked.

"That would be Cloud," he said under his breath.
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Zell cradled Selphie's body in his arms as he carried her to the gloomy looking mansion on the horizon. Looking down at the blanket he held tightly, he could see Selphie's pale face. She really did look as if she was only asleep, and not dead. He felt sick as he realized the blanket had become blood stained, which was only natural as Selphie's clothes were saturated with blood.

"Oh, Sefie, why did he do this to you?" he murmured. He and Quistis entered the gates of the Shinra Mansion. It was very quiet, but Cid had phoned through instructions on how to get to the laboratory, so Zell knew they weren't alone.

He went down the winding staircase, followed by Yuffie and Quistis, who was becoming dizzy. It was a 20 metre drop of you didn't stay close to the wall, and it was made even harder for Zell, who couldn't see where he was going. Eventually, they got to the bottom, and were greeted at the door by the petite silver haired young woman.

"I'm Liana." she said, smiling nervously at them. Quistis smiled back, Zell, gave her a look of suspicion. He didn't know why she wanted to help them, after all, she had ressurected the very man who had killed Selphie. Quistis took her hand.

"Please, help my friend." she said in a low voice. Liana looked down at the bloodstained blanket, pulling it back to reveal Selphie's face. Her light brown hair was matted with blood, and there was a trickle of black fluid from the corner of her mouth. Other than that, she looked as she had in life. Peaceful, clear skin, pretty. Liana looked sad. She knew that this was her fault.

"I'm sorry," she whispered to Selphie. Taking a deep breath, she decided she was going to save the younger girl if it was the last thing she ever did.

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Squall and Cloud ran to the front gate of the Garden. Tifa was behind

them, trying hard to keep up with the two. "Cloud!" she cried, seeing a figure moving towards them from behind. The three got into a fighting position, and prepared themselves for battle. Coming towards them were two figures.

Squall lowered his weapon.

"It's ok, they're my friends." he said, watching as Rinoa and Irvine came closer. Cloud put his massive sword back and turned towards the running couple. Rinoa looked worried and pale as she neared them. Irvine looked much the same.

"What happened Squall? Is everyone ok?" she asked, her voice sounding deeper than usual. Squall looked into her dark eyes, seeing the concern there. He bit his lip, not wanting to say what had happened to Selphie. Somehow, saying it would make it all the more real. But he had to tell her.

"Selphie...she was injured in battle. Badly, Rinoa," he said, swallowing hard. She didn't say a word, instead waiting for confirmation of what she guessed was the awful truth.

"She died of her wounds. I tried to save her, but..." he said, hating himself. He felt hollow inside, as if he was responsible for his friends death.

Rinoa's went pale as she stared into Squall's aqua-coloured eyes, searching for answers. Her bottom lip trembled, and her eyes glistened damply. She turned away from him.

Irvine looked heartbroken. He stumbled, leaning heavily against the turnstiles at the front gate.

"I never had the chance...to tell her how I felt about her..." he whispered, barely audible. Squall turned away from them. It was too painful to watch. He heard a sob from Rinoa, and heard Irvine comfort her. Squall shut his eyes and began running again, followed by Cloud, Tifa and eventually by Irvine and Rinoa.

Cloud stopped as they neared a drinking fountain outside. "There. He's near there." he said quietly. The five walked silently towards where Cloud led them. Rinoa's eyes grew wide as she saw the tall man standing by a little pool. He was holding a long silver sword. She heard a gasp from Tifa.

"Didn't we...We left that inside...." she whispered, horrified at the thought Sephiroth could have been behind them without them noticing. Cloud shook his head.

"No. That was probably an illusion, to make us think he was unarmed." he said. They were now only a few metres away from Sephiroth. The silver-haired man turned to look at them with a smile on his face.

"Cloud. How nice to see you again. Last time we didn't exactly get along. I hope it will be different this time?" he said harshly. Tifa stood closer to Cloud, who was holding his sword.

"Never Sephiroth. I'm here to make sure you die." he said. Sephiroth threw back his head and laughed.

"Dear Cloud, I'm already dead. You can't kill me twice." he said, an evil green light in his eyes. Rinoa moved forward. Squall reached to grab her, but it was too late. She was facing Sephiroth.

"You killed my friend!!" she shrieked. Sephiroth turned his cold gaze on her. She shivered, but her rage kept her going.

"Why did you kill her? She was only seventeen! And you killed the children, how could they have harmed you?" she said, almost crying.

"Your friend attacked me. She tried to kill me, why shouldn't I kill her? It's the rules of battle, you must be prepared for it if you fight." he said simply. She took a few steps forward, but Squall ran towards her, grabbing her arm.

"No," he said, pulling her backwards. Reluctantly, she went back with him.

Cloud stepped forward now. "Enough talk," he said, getting into a fighting stance. Squall joined him. Tifa, Irvine and Rinoa formed a back row, all in fighting position. This was new to all of them, fighting in such a large group, but they would do whatever necessary to kill Sephiroth.

The smile left Sephiroth's face. He now stood before the only two fighters ever to defeat him.

He swung out viciously with his Masamune, but both Cloud and Squall managed to evade it. The back row now released support magic, casting Regen and Protect over Cloud and Squall, letting them concentrate on attacking. Rinoa cast Aura over Squall, so he could perform his limit break.

When they were all prepared, Irvine and Rinoa attacked as well. As Tifa could only use her fists to attack him, she concentrated on GF's and magic, healing the others when necessary.

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Liana worked steadily on Selphie. The young girl's naked body was stretched out on a metal table, covered in a white sheet. Liana was working on the wound in her stomach. She had put a drip in Selphie's arm, feeding her a green fluid. Mako, thought Vincent, as he watched. Quistis and Zell had found it too distressing, and had left to wait in the other room.

Liana looked evil in the green light, the look of concentration on her face distorting her features. She picked up a cruel looking instrument, and touched it to Selphie's neck. Selphie's eyes flew open, and Liana smiled. "It's working," she said.

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Eventually, Squall noticed that Sephiroth's attacks were losing their accuracy and causing less damage. Great, he's wearing down, thought Squall. He launched another attack at Sephiroth, pleased when Sephiroth stumbled.

Cloud knew that Sephiroth was weakening. He had seen this before.

Even though he at first seemed to have superhuman strength, it would eventually wear down.

Finally, Sephiroth dropped to his knees. He laughed, hollowly.

Before they knew it, the SeeD's, Cloud and Tifa were all unconscious.

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Selphie was sitting down. She didn't know where she was, but it was very cold, very still, and very white. She didn't remember who she was, or what she was doing here. She uncrossed her legs and stood up. She crossed her arms over her bare chest, rubbing her arms to try and warm up. It didn't bother her that she wasn't wearing anything, why should it? She didn't remember ever needing clothes, or ever seeing other people.

She took a few steps forward. In the distance, she could see a door. It was just a dark blob, but somehow she knew it was a door. She walked towards it, feeling a bit warmer now. She put her hand on the door handle, and turned it.

On the other side of the door stood a man. He was dressed in white, and however hard Selphie tried, she couldn't make out any detail on his face. All she knew was that he was very tall. A light seemed to radiate from him, making it difficult to focus on anything. He spoke to her.

"Selphie. Do you know where you are?" he asked quietly. Selphie took a few minutes to figure out what he meant, and shook her head. she couldn't remember how to form words. Selphie. Was that her name? It had no meaning to her, she didn't recognise it at all.

The tall man put his hand on her bare shoulder. She looked up at him innocently. She didn't know what it was to be afraid, or happy. It was as if she had only been born a few minutes ago.

"Selphie. You are dead." he said gently. She frowned, not knowing what that meant. Was it a bad thing? She found herself able to talk, as something was jogged in her memory.

"What...why am I here? Who am I?" she asked, the words sounding foreign to her. The man smiled, even though she couldn't see it.

"Do you remember your friends? Shall I show them to you?" he asked. She nodded, letting him lead her through the door.

She faced a large screen. She stared at it as slowly colours and shapes moved to form figures. At first they were blurred and indistinct, but then they came together. A dark haired woman. Long, shiny hair, wearing a black dress.

"Do you remember? She looked after you as a baby." said the man.

Selphie concentrated.

"Matron," she whispered, memories slowly coming back. Another figure came onto the screen. This time it was someone she had hated. It was a short man, dark haired.

"He....my father...but he isn't really." she said, feeling confused. The tall man explained.

"Your foster father. He and his wife adopted you when you were six years old. He used to beat you, until you ran away." he said gently. Being reminded didn't upset her, somehow she knew here she was safe. Next on the screen was a young girl with blonde hair. She was wearing a uniform.

"Ziala. She took me to...I don't remember, but she looked after me." said Selphie.

"Yes. She was a SeeD. She found you when you ran away and brought you to her home garden of Trabia. You grew up there." he reminded her. She nodded, smiling. Another girl appeared on the screen. She had brown hair and blue eyes. Selphie recognised her immediatly.

"Mari. She was my best friend in Trabia." she said, happy to be remembering. Next was a boy, a short one with black hair.

"Silna. He was my first boyfriend." she said. After that, another blonde girl appeared on the screen. This one had longer hair than the first, and deep blue eyes. She was again wearing the SeeD uniform.

"Quistis! I remember, she's my best friend. She interviewed me for the SeeD exam, that was the first time we met..." she said, memories flooding back now. Another image flashed onto the screen. It was a teenage boy, dark hair, bluey-green eyes, a scar on his forehead.

"Squall. Oh, I must help him....he's fighting something...someone..." she said, trying to remember the last few minutes of her life. The tall man nodded gravely.

"Yes, Selphie. You must help him. He has no hope of defeating this enemy alone. Even with others fighting with him, there is no chance." he said. Selphie shook her head in despair.

"What can I do? I can't get back to them! Are they just going to die?" she said anxiously. He shook his head.

"No. You can help. The enemy, Sephiroth, is dead, like you. His body is indestructible, by mortals. You are immortal, Selphie. You are already dead. You can destroy him. But you must be careful. He can destroy you too. He is stronger than you, and is bitter and hard. You in life were light-hearted. You had no bitterness inside you, which in a way will protect you now. Because that is Sephiroth's weakness. He is bitter. He will be jealous of your innocence, and will try to take it from you by showing you horror. Don't let it get to you, and eventually he will destroy himself. But you must be careful. If you let what he shows you break your heart, then there is no chance." he said.

She nodded. "I understand. What do I have to do?" she said. He smiled.

"Meet Sephiroth. He is through that door. He is very overwhelming, so prepare yourself." he said, placing his hand on her shoulder again. He opened a black door which Selphie hadn't noticed before.

What she saw inside made her hair stand on end.

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Lina picked up another wire, anxious as Selphie's heart appeared to skip a beat on the monitor. She checked the green drip, and turned her attention back to Selphie's head. She had shaved off a small patch of Selphie's hair, and was connecting wires to it. Vincent smiled as he saw Selphie's finger move. Liana grinned at him.

"It's beginning now. She's slowly coming back. Her heart is beating, but her brain is still dead. The mako, that will help her. Now we have to wait. There are somethings that need to happen, things I don't understand. My father, he brought you back. Do you remember what happened?" she asked the tall, gaunt man. He half shut his eyes, remembering.

"I was in a very cold, white place. I wasn't alone. I believe there was a woman with me. I remember being unclothed, but it didn't bother me. I felt as if I was needed elsewhere. The woman guided me back. She showed me why I had to go back." Liana listened in fascination.

"Why? What was your reason for coming back?" she asked, one hand on Selphie's forehead, almost protectively. Vincent glanced down.

"Your mother. Lucrecia. She was in danger. After you and your brother were born, Hojo wanted to get rid off all evidence. He wanted to kill Lucrecia, and you. All he needed was Sephiroth. I had to save you two. I was your only hope."

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"Remember, you're their only hope," he whispered in her ear as she entered the dim room. Her eyes were wide, and she realised that she was wearing something now. She couldn't tear her eyes away from the horror at the end of the room. Sephiroth. A pale, grey Sephiroth. He had a hideous criss cross mesh of wounds on his bare chest, and his throat was streaming blood. It was slashed wide open. He was smiling. Looking down, Selphie saw that she was wearing a white-silver dress, like one which she had seen Rinoa wear once. This one was the colour of pearls, and seemed to radiate a holy light from it. It made her feel good. She felt as if she was an angel sent to face the devil.

Maybe she was. He rose, and she saw he was wearing only the black jeans he always had in life. She shuddered as the blood ran down his chest, but stood strong.

"Selphie. The little one. An angel sent to defeat me." he growled. She took a deep breath, ignoring the stench which surrounded him, and raised her arm, pointing at him. She noticed she was wearing elbow length white satin gloves.

"You are evil. Why must you torture and kill people. Innocents by the hundred have died by your sword. Can you not see the evil you have become?" she asked. She was surprised by her words and gestures. They were calm, graceful. Her words were cool, and carried an air of serenity. It was as if someone was speaking for her. In her mind flashed an image of an older girl. No, that wasn't right. An ancient woman. Centuries old....

It left her. She concentrated on Sephiroth instead. His long silver hair hung over his powerful shoulders, and seemed to flow with the blood. He looked like a creature from a nightmare.

"Selphie, are you doing this for your friends?" he asked, in a mocking tone. Selphie replied. The serenity had left her.

"Y..yes. I love them. I'll do anything I can to s..save them." she said, feeling a little scared. He laughed bitterly.

"When they left you? Look at this." he said, waving a muscular arm in her direction. She turned to look behind her. There was a mist, like the screen she had been shown her past on. The images on here were clearer though.

"Watch what happened after your death." he whispered. She gasped as she realised he had stolen up to her without her noticing. She fixed her eyes on the screen.

The shapes came together to form a familiar scene. She saw herself, battling Sephiroth. She heard Quistis scream in pain as he struck her hard on her shoulder, drawing blood. Squall healed her immediately. Then Selphie was hit. Sephiroth slashed hard at her hip, and caught her there. She remembered the searing pain as he had hit the bone. She had almost fainted then. but had stood up to deliver another attack. She saw herself swaying unsteadily as Squall launched renzokuken on Sephiroth. Her eyes were cloudy, and Selphie felt sad as she watched herself. Then came the fatal blow. Sephiroth smiled at Selphie evilly as he lowered his masamune, pointing it at her chest. She saw herself gasp, as he stepped forward and pushed the blade through her stomach. She saw herself fall to the floor, bleeding badly. She saw Squall glance at her, and she saw him smile.
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"What....?" she whispered as she watched the screen. Sephiroth laughed.

"Your friend. He doesn't seem all that bothered, does he?" said Sephiroth, gloating over Selphie's dying form on the screen. Selphie watched it closely, not believing Squall had wanted her to be injured. She saw Sephiroth cast Ultima, and in the after math, saw Quistis bending over her body.
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How small I look. How helpless, thought Selphie sadly, as she saw Quistis kneeling down beside the crumpled body.
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Quistis had taken Selphie's hands and whispered something to her. Selphie saw herself smile, and then say something. She watched as the blood poured from the wound on her stomach. It was difficult to

imagine that it actually happened. She was watching herself die. It was strange.

She looked for Squall on the screen. Surely he had been with her, she remembered... or was it Quistis. Some one had told her they were going to save her. Was that Quistis? She couldn't remember.

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"He wasn't there. He was with Xu. He didn't care Selphie." said Sephiroth. Selphie shook her head.

"No." she said quietly. She felt the coolness coming over her again. A name flashed into her head to accompany the serenity, but she didn't catch it. Caris, Nerith, something like that

"He was there with me. He knelt beside me. He held my hand. He told me he loved me, but I didn't hear him. But I knew he meant it." she said with conviction, and Sephiroth seemed to shrink a little.

What she said surprised her. She hadn't heard what he said. Even though she knew he cared, she didn't know he loved her. Undoubtedly she loved him. She knew that. But Squall couldn't show his emotions. The serenity (that was the only word she knew to describe it) became stronger.

"He did love me. I was special to him. And Quistis. We all were friends. Close friends. Nothing could change that. You can't convince me he didn't care because he did. He did heal me after You attacked me. He tried to save my life when I was lying on the floor. He was crying. He didn't want me to see, but he was. It hurt him more than he could show." she said. The words made her want to cry. They weren't her words, even though she was saying them. She searched her mind, trying to find out who this woman was who was telling her all these things.

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Aeris

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"Aeris?" she whispered. Sephiroth's face fell. He looked smaller. less....evil than before.

"Aeris. Who is she?" Selphie asked him. She made it sound like an accusation. Sephiroth smiled thinly.

"One of my victims. She was an Ancient. Like me. I murdered her." he said with pleasure. Selphie narrowed her eyes at him in disgust.

"You didn't destroy me." Selphie said. Sephiroth looked worried. He visibly shunk away from Selphie. Her voice was cool and soft.

"I defeated you. You can't destroy me. I am forever. I am forever your nemesis." she said. Selphie raised both arms. A white light seemed to glow from her. In that instant, Selphie understood everything.

"You are nothing. You are hollow on the inside. An empty shell eaten away by your own bitterness." she continued. Her voice resounded in the small room, and her tiny frame seemed to tower over the cowering Sephiroth.

"You owe your life to your sister. But you killed her too, didn't you?" she accused him. She knew what he had done.

"Yes." he said, his head hung in defeat. She continued, triumphant.

"You poisoned her. She has only a few hours to live. You don't understand. The moment her life ends, your soul dies. You will cease to exist. Your twin. She is the life. You are the death." she said, watching his grey face as the realisation sunk in. He had indeed poisoned Liana. Out of pity he had given her twenty four hours, but after that the poison would work, and she would die. And now, so would he. They were two halves of a whole. Only one of them carried the life for both of them. He had been told that, and he always believed it was him. But now he realised it wasn't.
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Selphie gasped as she felt the coolness leave her. She opened her eyes wide as a tall figure stood beside her.

"Aeris," she whispered. The woman smiled at her. She was young and pretty, her hair dark blonde, her eyes a beautiful sea green. It was her the light came from.

"Go, Sephiroth. You can only find peace if you leave." she said gently to him. He looked broken, a shell. He turned, and knelt on the floor, his back to the two women.

"Yes." he said, defeated. Aeris laid her hands on his shoulders.

A white light surrounded him. He disappeared.
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Rinoa sat up, feeling sleepy. Her long silky hair was in a mess, and she realised she had been sleeping on the floor. Looking up, she saw that she was outside. She knelt on the floor, trying to figure out what happened, her eyes half shut. She felt as if her brain wasn't working. She got to her feet shakily, and swayed as she tried to regain her balance. Looking around her, she gasped as she saw the still bodies of her friends.

She ran to Squall, as he was the nearest. "Squall, please..." she said to him, touching his face, trying to get him to wake up. She shook him, tugging on the leather jacket he was wearing. He didn't move. He felt cold to the touch, and she looked concerned as she shook him harder. Giving up, she turned to where Tifa lay, next to Cloud. She shook Tifa, rubbing her arm, trying to get her to regain consciousness. Tifa didn't stir. Reaching out, Rinoa touched her face. It was stone cold, same as Squall. She frantically went to each in turn, shaking them violently and finding each one as cold and still as the other.

Finally, she collapsed next to Squall, exhausted, and in despair.

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Liana swallowed hard as she disconnected all the wires from Selphie. She wasn't feeling too well, she hadn't been for the last hour. She

had been working on Selphie for over six hours now. It was a very delicate process, and one only she and her father had been able to perform. She had taught none of her own students how to bring back the dead, and she didn't plan to.

She coughed, feeling a tightness in her chest. Vincent looked up.

"You ok?" he asked. She nodded, and sat down heavily in a chair.

"It's finished. She should be fine now. Her heart beat is normal, and her brain patterns are normal. She is in a coma now. When she decides to return to her body, she will be able to. All we have to do now is wait. There is nothing more I can do." she said, stopping as another cough shook her tiny body. She gasped as she tried to catch her breath. Vincent put down the book he was reading, and crossed the room to her.

"Liana, what is it?" he asked. She looked at him with wide, frightened eyes. She put a hand to her mouth, and he narrowed his eyes in horror as it came away covered in blood. Her coughing was more violent now, and she couldn't stand up. He held her in his arms, trying to calm her down. It had no effect.

"Yo, what's going on..." said Zell as he entered the room. He saw the petite silver haired woman with blood coming out of her mouth, and rushed to her side. "Liana?!" he said. Her eyes had become cloudy, and her shimmering hair was in a mess around her face. Tears were steaming down her face. She knew what had happened. He had betrayed her. Her own brother. She had loved him. Her life was devoted to helping him. And he killed her.

She let out a shuddering sigh, and became still in Vincents arms. He released her body, and put her in the chair. She was dead. He knelt infront of her, wiping the blood from around her mouth. Lucrecia's daughter. He would have to tell her. He stood up, and walked away, shutting the heavy door behind him. Zell stood there, shocked. Liana had been alive a few minutes ago, how could this have happened so quickly?

Suddenly there was a soft moan. Zell turned from Liana, and looked at Selphie. She was covered only by a sheet. As he watched, she attempted to raise her arm. He gasped, and stepped closer to her. She turned her head. He smiled as she opened her eyes, blinked, and smiled at him.

"Zell, I'm back," she whispered.
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In the instant Selphie returned to her body, The SeeDs, Cloud and Tifa returned to theirs. They all sat up, sleepily, and looked dazed for a few seconds. Rinoa threw her arms around Squall's neck and kissed him, so pleased to have him back. He held her tightly.

Cloud and Tifa were also hugging. Cloud had been worried about her. It made him realise that she was special to him. She would never take Aeris' place, but she loved him. And he loved her.

What they had seen, he knew Aeris wasn't going to worry now. He came to terms with it. He now knew what she had really done for them, and he knew he would see her again.

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Quistis hugged Selphie, and both were crying happily as they embraced. Zell was standing outside the room, a smile on his face. He couldn't ever understand why women cried so much. They cried when they were happy, when they were sad, in pain, angry...how could he ever understand? He was just glad Selphie was back.

Quistis helped Selphie get dressed. Her favourite yellow dress had been thrown out, as it was stained beyond repair. She had to dress in some of Liana's clothes, which they found in the draw. Selphie didn't appear surprised to see that Liana had died. She was sad, because she thought she might have had the chance to say thankyou, but now it was gone.

"Selphie, let's go," said Quistis, putting her arm around her best friend, and leading her up the steps. Zell walked behind them, his eyes on Selphie, amazed that this miracle had been performed.

They left the mansion and walked to the Highwind. Cid greeted them at the helm.

"Vincent told me what happened. Selphie, it's nice to meet you." he said with a smile. She grinned back. She was wearing a white dress, which was a little long for her taste, but fitted her nicely.

"It's good to be back." she croaked. Zell put his hand on her back, and guided her inside safely.

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Squall and the others had all shared the same weird dream. They watched Selphie and another woman talk to Sephiroth, and watched as he fell to his knees, and then faded away. They didn't fight him. Cloud and Tifa, they knew this woman. Cloud had looked in great pain as he watched her. Tifa had been crying, and trying to get to her. Squall, he had been confused. Did this mean Selphie really was dead, and that he would never see her again? He wanted to go to her, to tell her that he cared, and that she was special to him, but he couldn't get to her.

They had seen Selphie in her ultimate form. Good, serene, holy. It was her in complete innocence. Was this what happened when you died? You became whole? Squall had smiled. The refined version of Selphie was not very different from the mortal Selphie.

Now what he wanted to know was whether or not he was going to be able to see her again.

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They went inside the ship, and found that the swirling blackness was still there. It was however, becoming less thick. "Hurry." said

Yuffie, diving into the hole. Selphie followed, and then Quistis and Zell. Cid and Vincent yelled goodbye to them through the hole, knowing they would never see them again.

Selphie crawled out the other end and found herself in her bedroom. The light was shining through the blinds, and her room seemed to glow. It was inviting, and she was so happy to be back.

"Let's go!" she said, anxious to find the others. Quistis looked worried.

"I hope they are ok. They went to fight Sephiroth." she said. Selphie turned to her and smiled.

"They won't have any trouble with him." she said softly.

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The five walked back into the garden. They had found Sephiroth's body, and had thrown it onto the funeral pyre which had been built by the mourning SeeDs. Cloud and Tifa were deep in thought as they walked back to the garden, the older couple arm in arm. Squall's mind was on Selphie. He wanted to see her again. This feeling, it was like when Rinoa was in a coma, but stronger. He felt a sense of urgency, as if it was important that he speak to Selphie.

Rinoa was also confused. When Squall had woken, he seemed strange. When she had hugged him, he had held her tightly, but she got the feeling he wanted to be holding someone else. Sadly, she thought she knew who that person was. The thing was, she wanted to see her too. Rinoa turned to him.

"Let's find the others." she said quietly. He hadn't told her there was a chance Selphie might live, he made himself forget it.

They walked along the halls of Garden, hearing muffled sobs, and soft conversations in the halls, which were filling up again. They moved to the side as two stretchers passed. On them were Xu and Cid. Thankfully, they were both alive.

Selphie walked along the halls, leaning on Zell for support. She felt very weak. She was cold as well, because she was barefoot, and the marble floors were freezing. She was looking around for any sign of Squall and the others. Eventually, she saw him. Her heart leapt to her throat, she was so glad to see him. He was staring at the ground as he walked, not looking up.

"Squall." she said softly as she drew level with him. He looked up sharply. She smiled, and felt tears pricking her eyes. His mouth dropped open. She stepped closer to him as Zell released her from his grip.

"I'm alive." she whispered to him. He stepped towards her and embraced her tightly. She winced in pain as she felt him brush against the stitches on her stomach, but she felt nice being hugged by him.

Rinoa stood to his side. She was looking at Selphie in shock. Squall finally released her, and Selphie turned to Rinoa. Rinoa smiled, and hugged Selphie, crying. This was so unexpected. Squall had told

her...oh, she just didn't understand.
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Yuffie stood next to Selphie, and smiled at her new friend. Selphie grinned back.

"I have to go now." said Yuffie. Selphie nodded.

"I know. You take care." she said. Yuffie smiled. She felt in her pocket for something. She took out a red glowing ball, and put it in Selphie's hand.

"Here. Take this. It's materia. A special kind." she said. Selphie felt touched. She didn't have anything to give back though. Zell did though. He brought out of his pocket six cards

"Here, Yuffie. You'll never be able to forget us now." he said . Yuffie examined the cards. On each one was a picture of a different member of the group. She smiled.

"It's wonderful" she said. Cloud turned to her.

"Yuffie, we must go now." he said sadly. She nodded. The girl turned, and the three walked back to Selphie's room.

They were never seen again.
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About a month later, when all the fuss had died down, Squall and Selphie were sitting talking in the training centre. They had with them the materia Yuffie had given Selphie. On a closer examination, it had names written on it.
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Cloud Strife

Tifa Lockhart

Yuffie Kisengari

Vincent Valentine

Red XIII (Nanaki)

Barrett Wallis

Aeris Gainsborough

Cid Highwind
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They had, by chance, seen one of these names in a book they had found in the library. It was a very old book, and was full of ancient myths and legends. In it were the first three names of the list. They had seen Cloud Strife first. He was a legendary hero from about 2000

years ago. It was hard to believe. From this, they had realised that the people they had met were not from another world, but from the past.

Selphie sighed. She was reading a story about Yuffie Kisengari, 'the legendary Ninja of Wutai'. Apparently, Yuffie had grown to be a beautiful, fierce woman, with extraordinary fighting skill. She had not married, but had had many offers. Eventually, she had had a child, one she called Liana.

Squall was reading a similar book. He, Selphie and Zell had gone over to Esthar to find these ancient legends, which had been written over and over in the books there. He had found that Cloud and Tifa married, and had several children together. These children carried the names of their parents, the females the name of Lockhart, the males the name of Strife. Squall learned it had been the custom on the Centra continent until they were wiped out by the Lunar Cry. The book also noted the names of all the descendants of the pair, who were all very proud of their ancestry. The latest entry was dated only 40 years ago. Squall gasped as he read it. The name had changed slightly over the two thousand years.

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Raine Leonhart

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He leant over to Selphie and showed her. She smiled. "Are you a descendant of Cloud and Tifa? That is sooo cool! It explains why you are such an exceptional fighter." she said, reading the entry under Raine Leonhart. It said that she was the daughter of Kine Strife and Herria Forlen. Because she was female, she took the name of Leonhart from her father instead of Strife. Squall had never seen the connection before. Lockhart/Leonhart, he saw the similarity now.

"Raine....your mother." said Selphie, thinking about it. It had been six months since Laguna had told Squall he was his father, and it had taken Squall a long time to come to terms with his ancestry. This was something to be proud of. He was surprised Raine had never told Laguna that she was one of the Strife/Lockhart family. Now he could trace his family back almost 2000 years.

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Selphie uncrossed her legs and sat up. They were in the training centre instead of the quad because they wanted to be alone. The subject they were reading up on was one very sensitive to both of them. Selphie wanted to know what had happened to her friend Yuffie, and the story of Aeris. She had discovered Aeris was indeed killed by Sephiroth, and died to save the planet. She was one of the Ancients. Selphie was sad to discover that once they had found the promised land, and all Aeris' friends moved there, their descendants had been wiped out in the Lunar Cry which destroyed the Centra continent. Except a few, who had been out of the continent fighting. The descendants of the famous group were all exceptional fighters, and most made careers for themselves as mercenaries.

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Like Squall. she thought. Squall....she looked over to him. He was sitting on a large rock, his dark head bent over a book, and his hair dripping over his face. He looked so serious, she thought. She

smiled. She was lucky to have a friend like him. One who cared for her as much as he did.

She looked up as Quistis ran into the secret area. She smile at the two as she caught her breath, and sat down beside Selphie on the coarse grass. Selphie showed her the entry in the book describing Raine. Quistis smiled, and looked at Squall.

"Wow! That's amazing!" she said, surprised.

"Yeah...I had no idea." said Squall. He was planning on going to Esthar to tell Laguna. It would be nice to have his name in the book under his mothers. As he read, he discovered he had cousins, which were younger than him. It was amazing. He had this whole family tree infront of him, which he hadn't known about until now.

"Are you going to tell Laguna?" asked Selphie. He looked over to his two friends, who were gazing at him. He smiled, wondering why they were looking at him like that.

"What?" he asked. Selphie grinned.

"You look cute with that serious look on your face!" she laughed. He laughed back, and the three stood up.

"Let's go. We have to go to Esthar." he said, putting his arm around Selphie.

The three walked together, laughing.

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The End.

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End
file.